

# "ONE PERSON'S TRASH"

Classroom Guide

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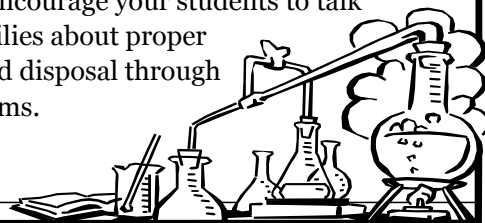
## Spring 2010

With this issue, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. The first Earth Day in 1970 was planned as a nationwide "teach-in."

Your students may not be familiar with the terms *teach-in* or *sit-in*. Maybe this anniversary of Earth Day would be a great time to discuss these forms of consciousness raising and political activity.

If you have suggestions or comments for improving the newsletter or this Classroom Guide, please call or write us.

Encourage your students to do some research at home. Have them look for hazardous products under sinks, on storage shelves, and in the garage. They should keep an eye out for cleaning products, drain and toilet cleaners, pesticides and poisons, lawn and garden care products, paint and painting products, automotive fluids, and related items. If they aren't sure what is hazardous, remind them to look for "signal words," such as *poison*, *danger*, *warning*, *caution*, *flammable*, *corrosive*, *explosive*, and *toxic*. Ask your students to make a list of hazardous chemicals that they find. Then encourage your students to talk to their families about proper handling and disposal through local programs.



## Reader Redux

Incorporate this newsletter into your classroom as you might use a newspaper or magazine. Here are some ideas to help your students get started:

- Carl Hiassen is a journalist turned novelist. He has written thrillers for adults and young adults. His three books of young-adult fiction are: *Hoot*, *Flush*, and *Scat*. What do you think of these titles? What do these one-word titles have in common? What clues do these titles give you about the books? If you were going to write a book, what would you write about? What would you title your book?
- What is your favorite landscape (mountains, ocean, woods, city, park, etc.)? Why? What images does the memory of this place (or type of place) bring to mind for you? What feelings does this landscape evoke? What people, if any, do you think of when you recall this landscape? In addition to sights, does thinking about this landscape also summon smells or sounds? Reflect on your favorite landscape. You might write a paragraph, letter, riddle, or song lyric. Or, you might create a sketch, drawing, collage, or poster.



# Earth Day Turns 40!

What began in April 1970 was no ordinary celebration. The first Earth Day involved 20 million Americans bringing environmental issues to the forefront of public awareness. By 1990, the celebration was international, involving more than 200 million people. This year will find more than *a billion* environmentally concerned people celebrating around the world.



The number of citizens participating worldwide is impressive. However, the success of Earth Day is not measured only by the number of people who participate in once-a-year events. Since 1970, there have been many changes that have benefitted the environment. At the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website, [www.epa.gov/earthday/history.htm](http://www.epa.gov/earthday/history.htm), there is a timeline of significant environmental achievements in the U.S. since 1970. Have your students go to this site to learn more.

A new website explores the "father" of the Earth Day movement, Senator Gaylord Nelson. Explore "Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day: The Making of the Modern Environmental Movement" at [www.nelsonearthday.net](http://www.nelsonearthday.net).

You might also encourage your students to visit the Earth Day Network site, [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

## Discussion Questions

- The huge success of the first Earth Day surprised its organizers. What about the 1960s (culturally, environmentally, politically) may have contributed to the success of the April 1970 event?
- On June 23, 1969, the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio caught fire. River fires had not been uncommon in the 19th and early 20th century when many industrial chemicals were dumped directly into our nation's waterways. However, by 1969, many homes had televisions—making the Cuyahoga River fire more than just a local event. How does media attention on events affect what we discuss and what we do? Can media attention "make" things important to a large group of people? How is this good? When is it not so good?
- Have any of your students seen the movie *Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution*? It was in some theaters last fall and will be on the PBS program "American Experience" on April 19. *Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution* is a documentary. (If needed, discuss what a documentary is.) Documentaries are common on TV, such as on the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, or PBS. What is the purpose of documentaries? How do they differ from movies that are based on fictional stories? Why is the development of Earth Day an important topic for a documentary? For more information about *Earth Days: The Seeds of a Revolution*, visit [www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/earthdays/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/earthdays/).

## Extension Activities

Ask your students to create a newscast about the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day. Encourage them to go to several sources and present varying views.

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Brainstorm a list of "Earth Day" actions that your students might take at school, at home, and in our community. These should be activities that improve the environment in some way.

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Ask your students to help educate students in their school, children at an elementary school, or members of their community about Earth Day, its history, and/or ways to improve the environment. With the resources in our newsletter and other information, have your students create posters that communicate their message. These posters should be highly graphic, well-illustrated, and use only brief text, such as slogans (short, catchy phrases or sentences). Like billboards or bumper stickers, posters which effectively raise awareness or call for action need to make only one or two points.

Because it is often difficult to communicate a complex message with only a few words, this activity will help your students expand their vocabularies, eliminate wordiness in their writing, use active (instead of passive) verbs, and coordinate visual and textual elements to convey a concise message.

